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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

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The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2007 of the Council

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Coordination, programme and other questions: ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 60/265, including 61/16

Economic and environmental questions

Social and human rights questions

Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16

Report of the Secretary-General

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Summary

The Economic and Social Council continues to promote an integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences. The annual ministerial review takes an in-depth look at a chosen cross-cutting theme common to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. The results of the various conference follow-up processes are brought together in an integrated manner at the review. A focused effort through the annual ministerial review process would be the most effective way for the Council to review substantively the progress made in the integrated conference follow-up.

Several procedural improvements in the follow-up of conferences have facilitated the progress in advancing an integrated approach in the substantive work of Council machinery. The Council and its subsidiary bodies have increased their interaction among them. The functional commissions have completed examining their methods of work. The adoption of multi-year programme of work for the annual ministerial review will further facilitate the engagement by the Council system.

Given that the integrated substantive review is now being pursued by the annual ministerial review process and the procedural improvements of the follow-up processes have been completed for the time being, the annual report on the integrated follow-up may add little value going forward. The Council may wish to triennialize the report to provide a reasonable time period before the next overall review of the integrated conference follow-up. The General Assembly could continue its substantive review of the integrated follow-up based on the comprehensive annual report of the Economic and Social Council.

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations conferences and summits held since the 1990s generated an unprecedented global consensus on a shared vision of development. The broad-based framework laid the groundwork for the Millennium Summit, at which a series of time-bound goals and targets were adopted as the Millennium Development Goals. Five years later when world leaders returned to assess progress, they recognized that the achievement of many of the internationally agreed development goals was off track in a number of countries, and that vigorous implementation was needed without delay.

2. To close the implementation gap, world leaders pledged to develop and to implement comprehensive national development strategies to achieve their national development priorities as well as the internationally agreed development goals. Member States committed themselves at the highest level to use the Millennium Development Goals and the goals and strategies agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits as the foundation of their national development strategies.

3. Since 1995, the Economic and Social Council has promoted an integrated and coordinated follow-up aimed at enhancing coherence among the various conference follow-up processes. The individual conference follow-up mechanisms and processes undertaken by various functional commissions together contribute to the whole spectrum of the United Nations development agenda, while maintaining their distinctiveness.

4. Several efforts have been made in order to strengthen the follow-up mechanism. Most recently, the annual ministerial review, launched in 2007 pursuant to the 2005 World Summit Outcome and General Assembly resolution 61/16, provides a central forum for all stakeholders to assess progress in overall implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to examine the results that have been achieved in implementing the United Nations development agenda. It conducts a substantive review, focusing on cross-sectoral themes common to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences, as envisaged by General Assembly resolutions 57/270 B and 61/16.

5. To complement the annual ministerial review, section II of the present report highlights the progress made on the conference follow-up as it relates to the theme of the 2008 annual ministerial review, "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development", and the main policy issues discussed by the functional commissions. Section III of the report addresses the institutional aspects of the follow-up processes and how to promote policy coherence and strengthen the link between policy and operations.

II. Overview of assessments of progress emanating from conference review processes

6. The global conference follow-up mechanisms have framed their work around the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and have adopted a comprehensive approach to addressing the follow-up to their individual conferences, recognizing that the different goals and

targets agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits can be achieved only if they are pursued together. The functional commissions have been instrumental in maintaining focus on the implementation of the outcomes of different conferences within their respective purviews. The United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes also actively contribute to the annual ministerial review process through their participation in an organization of meetings, special events, and so on, and through the inputs they provide to the report of the Secretary-General. They also contribute to the relevant functional commissions, with focus on the implementation of conference outcomes.

A. Global perspective: assessments of progress by functional commissions

7. Although the adoption of the theme for the 2008 annual ministerial review came after most commissions had established their multi-year work programme, commissions made contributions to the theme in various ways on specific aspects of sustainable development, such as the impact of climate change to environmental statistics and indicators, urbanization, agriculture and rural development.

8. Against the backdrop of the current global food crisis, the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its sixteenth session, in May 2008, emphasized the need for ramping up investment in research and development in innovative and sustainable agricultural technologies and infrastructure in developing countries. The food crisis has highlighted the consequences for food security of neglecting agriculture and the urgency of redressing that situation. An integrated response was needed to address the multiple factors which contributed to the crisis. The long-term challenges include: trends in agricultural production, consumption and prices; the impacts of climate change and high energy prices; and new factors such as demand for biofuels. It was also recognized that the review of agriculture cannot be de-linked from the other components of the thematic cluster of the session, namely rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. The session provided a foundation for discussions on the global food crises, in the Economic and Social Council on 20 May, and at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome from 3 to 5 June 2008.

9. Climate change was highlighted by many as having important implications for all the issues in this cluster, with particular challenges facing Africa and small island developing States. Pursuing sustainable patterns of consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, was essential to progress in that important area.

10. Public-private partnerships, including the World Summit on Sustainable Development partnerships, have proven important in enhancing sustainable development, including through promoting multi-stakeholder involvement, resource mobilization and facilitation of technology transfer and diffusion. The private sector can play an important role in increasing agricultural production and promoting rural development.

11. Enhancement of capacity-building was of paramount importance, particularly in rural and remote areas. Lack of knowledge, appropriate legislation and institutional infrastructure, and weakness in education systems and human resources development continue to affect adversely the ongoing efforts for promoting

agricultural productivity, rural development and for combating desertification and land degradation.

12. Gender was a prominent cross-cutting issue for the current cycle of the Commission. The primary role of women in agriculture, notably in Africa, needs to be recognized and measures devised to enhance further their productivity, addressing the specific challenges that they may face in gaining access to land, credit and the legal system.

13. Addressing the means of implementation, including meeting commitments to financing for development, trade, technology transfer, scientific knowledge, education, and capacity-building, will be critical to ensuring progress. Greater policy coherence and coherence of donor support are required with regard to agriculture and the other issues under consideration. Progress in addressing the challenges identified by the Commission at its sixteenth session will require strengthened international cooperation, strong political commitment from Governments, and active engagement of all major groups, which the Commission is expected to consolidate at its seventeenth session.

14. The Commission on the Status of Women considered "Gender perspectives on climate change" as the emerging issue for its fifty-second session, through an interactive expert panel.[1] The outcome of the expert panel, in the form of a Chairperson's summary, has been forwarded as a contribution to the annual ministerial review. The Commission also transmitted a conference room paper on gender perspective and sustainable development (E/CN.6/2008/CRP.2) as input to the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2008 of the Council.

15. The panel discussion highlighted the gender-specific impacts of climate change. It noted that women are among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and natural disasters because of their domestic responsibilities, including food security and provision of heat and water supply. Women play a vital leadership role in community revitalization and natural resource management, but they tend to be underrepresented in decision-making on sustainable development, including on climate change. To increase women's participation in climate change activities, actions are being taken to promote global and national networks that advocate for greater participation of women in the climate change negotiations and the inclusion of gender perspectives in policy formulation and evaluation. Action should also be taken to include gender mainstreaming in all mitigation and adaptation policies, including gender impact assessments and gender-responsive budgeting.

16. On forests, the adoption of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests on 17 December 2007 (General Assembly resolution 62/98, annex) was seen a historic achievement, which marked a new era in sustainable forest management and international cooperation. The instrument should also enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular with respect to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. The eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in 2009 will consider the topic "Forests in a changing environment", in particular in the context of climate change, biodiversity and desertification/deforestation.

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 7* (E/2008/27), chap. II.

17. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice discussed the need for holistic and comprehensive national multisectoral approaches to preventing and combating illicit international trafficking in forest products, including timber, wildlife and other forest biological resources, as well as for international coordination and cooperation in support of such approaches, including through technical assistance activities to build the capacity of relevant national officials and institutions.

18. On climate change, the Statistical Commission decided to develop an agenda for action by the statistical community. On development indicators, the Commission commended the efforts by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal Indicators in implementing some of the recommendations contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 and in including an increasing number of Member States in its deliberations.[2] It also took note of the serious concerns expressed by several Member States about the quality of the measurement of indicators, and requested submission of an updated report to the Commission at its next session. It also requested the Inter-Agency and Expert Group to give greater consideration to the need for improving the capacity of countries to produce the indicators and to increase efforts to further improve the indicators of all Millennium Development Goals through methodological and technical refinements.

19. At its seventh session, in 2008, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues discussed the theme "Climate change, bio-cultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges", focusing on the issue of climate change and research into mitigation measures being taken and how these are impacting on indigenous peoples.[3] A special focus was given to the Pacific region as an area that is already feeling the adverse impacts of climate change. The Forum urged States, the World Bank, and other multilateral and bilateral financial institutions to consider alternative systems beyond the perpetuation of highly centralized fossil-fuel-based energy supplies and large-scale bioenergy and hydropower dams. The Forum called for an increase in support for renewable, low-carbon and decentralized systems, taking into account the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams. The Forum stressed that indigenous peoples must have a say in decision-making processes on how to combat global climate change. The Forum also made a number of recommendations on the Millennium Development Goals and human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, among other issues.

20. The functional commissions also pursued follow-up of conferences according to their multi-year work programmes, encompassing the various aspects of the United Nations development agenda including: employment, ageing, gender and finance, post-conflict peacebuilding, violence against women, alternative development and the information society.

21. Full and productive employment has been recognized as a global priority following the World Summit for Social Development, which placed the goal of full and productive employment at the centre of the United Nations development agenda. Governments committed to promoting full employment as a basic priority of their economic and social policies. Since the 2005 World Summit, full

[2] Ibid., *Supplement No. 4* (E/2008/24), chap. I.B, decision 39/114.

[3] Ibid., *Supplement No. 23* (E/2008/43), chap. I.

employment and decent work for all received renewed attention. The substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2006 and the ministerial declaration further highlighted the importance of promoting full employment and decent work.

22. In 2007, the review segment of the Commission for Social Development undertook an evaluation of progress in achieving the goals of full employment and decent work, and their impact on poverty eradication and social integration. At its forty-sixth policy session, in 2008, the Commission for Social Development focused on policies and practical measures to facilitate the implementation of the goal of full employment and decent work. It resulted in action-oriented resolution "Promoting full employment and decent work for all", which reaffirmed the commitments of the Social Summit and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly and recognized that a people-centred approach must be at the centre of economic and social development. It was stressed that full and productive employment and decent work for all are key elements of the sustainable development of all countries and reaffirmed that it should be made a central objective of national policies and international policies as well as national development strategies, as part of the global efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.[4]

23. Also during its forty-sixth session, the Commission for Social Development concluded the first review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002. The Commission adopted a resolution encouraging Governments to continue their efforts to mainstream the concerns of older persons into their policy agendas and to strengthen efforts to develop their national capacity to address the national implementation priorities identified during the review and appraisal exercise. In addition, the Commission acknowledged the essential contributions of the regional commissions to the implementation, review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan, including the organization of regional review and appraisal meetings and the preparation of their outcome documents and encouraged the international community to enhance international cooperation to support national efforts to eradicate poverty.[5]

24. On financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, the Commission on the Status of Women, at its fifty-second session, adopted agreed conclusions[6] to be brought to the attention of the General Assembly as an input into the preparations for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha from 29 November to 2 December 2008. By its agreed conclusions, the Commission emphasized the need for political commitment to make available human and financial resources for the empowerment of women and that funding had to be identified and mobilized from all sources and across all sectors to achieve the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Commission also reaffirmed the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, which called upon Governments to incorporate a gender perspective into the design, development, adoption and execution of all policies and budgetary processes, as appropriate, in order to promote equitable, effective and appropriate resource

[4] Ibid., *Supplement No. 6* (E/2008/26), chap. I.A.

[5] Ibid., chap. I.C.

[6] Ibid., *Supplement No. 7* (A/2008/27), chap. I.A.

allocation and establish adequate budgetary allocations to support gender equality and development programmes that enhance women's empowerment.

25. On post-conflict peacebuilding, the Commission on the Status of Women held an interactive dialogue to evaluate progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions on "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding", adopted by the Commission at its forty-eighth session in 2004. Participants confirmed that attention to gender equality issues and women's full and effective participation in peace processes and peacebuilding was crucial in the promotion of gender equality, as well as in ensuring the sustainable and effective reconstruction of political, social, economic and legal structures in countries emerging from conflict. Despite progress made since the adoption of the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2004 and of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), participants noted a continuing underrepresentation of women in peace negotiations and processes.

26. Regarding violence against women, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Statistical Commission held a joint dialogue on indicators to measure violence against women. Such indicators and the data collected to support them would increase the visibility and give a clearer picture of the scope of violence against women, and of trends within and between countries. They would significantly enhance States' capacity to put in place effective policy and other measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women. Participants recognized the need for capacity-building and institutional development to ensure the involvement of the national statistical offices in the collection and dissemination of statistics on violence against women. Participants emphasized the need to harmonize methodologies for the collection of data and statistics and to allocate sufficient human and financial resources.

27. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice stressed that States have an obligation to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including women and girls, and must exercise due diligence in preventing and investigating violence against women and girls and in punishing the perpetrators of such violence in order to eliminate impunity and to provide protection to the victims and that failure to do so violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women and girls of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

28. At its forty-first session, in 2008, the Commission on Population and Development adopted a resolution on national, regional and international action on the subject of population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development.[7] In that resolution, the Commission recognized that the world population was undergoing a historic and unprecedented transformation from being mostly rural to being predominantly urban, with major disparities in the level of urbanization remaining among regions and countries. The Commission considered that the rapid urbanization of the world's population required integrated and participatory approaches to spatial management, including through coordinated action between national Governments and local authorities, with the support of the international community. In that regard, the Commission urged Governments to promote linkages between urban and rural areas in recognition of their economic,

[7] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5* (E/2008/25), chap. I.B, resolution 2008/1.

social and environmental interdependence. The Commission also called upon Governments to address the challenges and opportunities of urban growth and internal migration by taking prompt, forward-looking and sustained action to ensure that those phenomena would have a positive impact on economic growth, poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. The Commission also called upon the international community to support the efforts of developing countries in that regard, including through building capacities to respond to those challenges and opportunities.

29. On the issue of promoting sustainability and integrality in alternative development as an important part of drug control strategy, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs emphasized that the problem of illicit production of narcotic drugs is often related to development problems, in particular poverty, health and illiteracy, and that they must be tackled in a larger development context through a holistic and integrated approach. The Commission encouraged Member States, in the context of the review of the progress achieved in meeting the goals and targets set in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, to consider developing a set of international guiding principles on alternative development, based on the sharing of best practices and lessons learned from different countries and regions.[8]

30. Implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society is being undertaken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/252. The challenges ahead are to ensure the comprehensive exchange of views, information and experiences, promotion of policy dialogue and advocacy for the implementation of the Summit outcomes by a variety of United Nations bodies, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and partners, requiring the strengthening of cooperation and collaboration, and flow of information among all parties involved.

31. In response to those challenges, the Council, in its resolutions 2007/8 and 2007/29, decided that it would monitor the information exchange on the Summit outcomes in the context of its annual consideration of the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, on the basis of the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and drawing upon other relevant inputs.

32. The United Nations, the intergovernmental bodies and multi-stakeholders constitute the major players on the implementation and follow-up activities of the Summit. In response to Council resolution 2007/8, entitled "Flow of information for the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society", a report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the Summit at the regional and international levels (E/CN.16/2008/2) as submitted to the Commission. The report assessed global and regional progress in the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society and highlighted major initiatives including the facilitation of the exchange of views, information and experiences, building capacities and the promotion of policy dialogue and advocacy for mainstreaming information and communication technologies for development. Also, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (see A/60/687), cooperation, exchange of information and

[8] Ibid., *Supplement No. 8* (E/2008/28), chap. I.A, draft resolution I.

promotion, and enhancing cooperation among diverse stakeholders, are activities undertaken through a system of action-line facilitators.

B. Regional perspectives

33. The regional commissions have placed the Millennium Development Goals at the centre of their work programmes and continue to contribute to the efforts of their member States towards meeting the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The follow-up work has taken several forms — research, policy analysis, advocacy, promoting policy dialogue, sharing best practices, developing codes and indicators and monitoring their implementation, and strengthening statistical capacities for tracking progress towards the development goals. They have helped identify regional priority areas for action and have realigned their programmes accordingly.

34. In the area of sustainable development, the regional commissions support the integration of environmental concerns into the broader development agenda at the national, subregional and regional levels in order to strengthen the interface between environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic development in national policymaking for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction. The Commissions conduct the preparation of regional assessment reports and regional implementation meetings to inform and contribute regional perspectives to processes mandated by the Commission on Sustainable Development. Interregional collaboration is also taking place. For example, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat are working together on a project to improve the availability, reliability, timeliness and comparability of environment statistics, indicators and accounts.

35. Countries in Africa have made real efforts to integrate the Millennium Development Goals into their national development plans and strategies and aligned them with the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. With support from the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and other organizations, over 41 countries have started the process of preparing national development strategies aligned with the Millennium Development Goals and other development goals. However, the region continues to suffer from chronic and rising poverty and at current trends, Africa as a region is not likely to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. ECA has contributed to the work of the Millennium Development Goal Africa Steering Group and its Working Group, which was established by the Secretary-General in September 2007 to mobilize resources and sustain international support for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. Furthermore, as a strategic partner to the African Peer Review Mechanism, ECA continued to participate actively in the process and contribute technical inputs to the country reviews carried out in 2007. The third assessment report on the Millennium Development Goals, jointly prepared by ECA and the African Union Commission, will be submitted to the next African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government in July 2008.

36. To assist African countries in addressing the challenge of climate change through policy research and capacity-building, an African Climate Policy Centre

will be established at ECA in partnership with The Energy and Resources Institute of India and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). ECA is also actively involved in the development of the African Union/ECA/African Development Bank joint initiative on land policy that seeks to develop and build consensus on a continental framework and guidelines for land policy in Africa.

37. For countries in the Asia-Pacific region, major gaps remain in both the formulation and implementation of the national development strategies, including limited institutional capacity to implement development strategies and lack of financial resources. Regarding sustainable development, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) organized a regional implementation meeting for the Commission on Sustainable Development in November 2007, in collaboration with several United Nations entities, to review the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The meeting identified the development of environmentally sustainable economic growth patterns, based on a vibrant and inclusive rural sector and the eco-efficient use of natural capital, as the overarching and unique challenge for Asia and the Pacific. At its sixty-fourth session in April 2008, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific examined the theme "Energy security and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific".[9]

38. In Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC has been promoting the establishment of linkages between the implementation of the "leading actions" identified in the Monterrey Consensus and that of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. These follow-up actions have mainly focused on analytical work, promoting policy dialogue, capacity-building and sharing of best practices. Since 2003, ECLAC has been taking advantage of its annual Regional Seminar on Fiscal Policy to hold methodological workshops on environmental expenditure and investment, aimed at promoting the use of uniform and comparable methodologies to quantify and classify public and private environmental expenditure and investment, in order to improve the quality of the information available to decision makers in designing funding strategies for environmental purposes. In addition to those efforts for integrated follow-up, the secretariat has been assisting member States with the formulation of regional consensus documents for presentation to upcoming United Nations conferences, summits and review meetings. Furthermore, ECLAC developed and maintains the inter-agency website (www.eclac.cl/cumbres) for the integrated follow-up to United Nations summits and conferences, which includes a decentralized management module to allow funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to present their contributions to the various international conferences, thus facilitating the exchange of information required for improving inter-agency coordination and enhancing system-wide coherence.

39. In the Arab region, a partnership formed since 2003 among ESCWA, UNEP and the League of Arab States follows up on the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation by providing regular substantive technical support to the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment. ESCWA also cooperates with the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Electricity in the field of energy for sustainable development. Programmes to improve energy efficiency in the various

[9] Ibid., *Supplement No. 19* (E/2008/39), chap. III.

economic sectors have been implemented with reasonable success, and integration projects on electricity grids interconnection and gas distribution networks have been implemented. Policies to support such trends have been integrated in national decision-making in several counties in the region. ESCWA, in cooperation with the League of Arab States and UNEP, launched a Programme on Trade and Environment Capacity-Building in the Arab Region. In the area of sustainable water resources management, all ESCWA member countries are currently reviewing their national water strategies within the Integrated Water Resources Management framework, but very few countries have completed those strategies and integrated them into social and economic development frameworks.

40. In Europe, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has been implementing a major reform, including the promotion of an intersectoral and cross-sectoral approach to its activities. The reform identified the Millennium Development Goals and gender as cross-sectoral issues to address within the ECE framework. The session of the Commission became biennial since 2007. At its 2009 session, the Commission will review the reform and the progress made.

III. Promoting policy coherence and strengthening the link between the global policy debate and national activities

41. The Economic and Social Council has an important role in assessing how the organizations of the United Nations system integrate the United Nations development agenda in their programmes of work and provide coherent support to the implementation of these national strategies. The present section will examine the progress made in strengthening policy coherence (the horizontal coordination) at the intergovernmental, inter-agency and country levels, and the link between policy and operational activities (the vertical coordination).

A. Promoting policy coherence at the intergovernmental level

42. Several procedural improvements in the follow-up of conferences have facilitated the progress in advancing an integrated approach in the substantive work of the Council machinery, as called for by relevant resolutions. The Council, in its resolution 2007/29, noted the completion of functional commissions' review of their working methods, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/270 B and by the Council in its resolution 2006/44.

43. Since July 2002, the Bureau of the Council and the chairpersons of the functional commissions have met annually to exchange views on how the subsidiary machinery of the Council might enhance its contribution to the Council's role as the principal body in overseeing the overall implementation of the internationally agreed development goals. In 2007, such a meeting was held for the first time in January, given the new mandates and structure of the Council as called for in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and confirmed in General Assembly resolution 61/16. On 29 January 2008, the Bureau of the Council met with the chairpersons of the functional commissions again to consider ways in which the Council's subsidiary machinery can contribute to the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum.

44. **To ensure that the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum function effectively as a review mechanism, the Council's subsidiary and related bodies should provide analyses and policy inputs that enhance the coordinated and integrated follow-up of the outcomes of the conferences and summits and help to advance national development strategy formulation, evaluate progress and promote international cooperation in pursuit of development goals**.

45. The establishment of a multi-year work programme for the annual ministerial review provides predictability in the themes of the review, which facilitates timely preparations, enables full engagement of the Council system and mobilizes expertise from Member States, the United Nations system, and other stakeholders. Standing agenda items introduced by a number of the functional commissions facilitate the preparation of the substantive inputs. **Functional and regional commissions, as well as agencies, and United Nations system entities should be encouraged to review their priorities and programmes taking into account the multi-year work programme of the annual ministerial review**. This would ensure that the support for the review becomes systematic and a priority in the work of the United Nations system.

46. Collaboration among functional commissions has been taking place to enhance policy coherence by holding joint bureau meetings and interactive expert panels, on cross-cutting issues. For example, the Commission on the Status of Women has continued its close collaboration with the Statistical Commission, through a joint high-level round-table and two joint parallel events on the development of indicators, including on violence against women. The Commission on the Status of Women has also organized meetings with other functional commissions to exchange views on key issues as well as to promote mainstreaming of gender perspectives into their work. For example, in preparation for the review processes, the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women has held meetings with the Chairpersons of the Commission on Population and Development and the Commission for Social Development. Since the establishment of the Human Rights Council, the President of the Human Rights Council has been invited to participate in the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

B. Reporting on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences

47. The Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly may wish to reassess the value added of the annual reporting on the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. In paragraph 39 of its resolution 57/270B, the General Assembly established the agenda item to be taken up annually to consider the assessment of the implementation of the conference outcomes, and to consider the relevant chapters of the annual report of the Council. However, that arrangement was put in place before the conception and launch of the annual ministerial review.

48. The United Nations system organizations as well as the Council's subsidiary bodies together conduct a vast amount of activities contributing to conference follow-up, covering the entire development spectrum. The resolutions of the Council under this item in recent years indicate that reviewing this information in a

sweeping manner has not prompted any action-oriented directives or new substantive insights. Given the vastness of this task, a focused effort through the annual ministerial review process would be a more effective way to conduct the Council's overall responsibilities in the integrated conference follow-up. This is also consistent with the spirit of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly (resolutions 50/227, 52/12B, 57/270B and 61/16).

49. The annual ministerial review takes an in-depth look at a chosen cross-cutting theme common to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, including the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. The results of the various conference follow-up processes are brought together in an integrated manner at the annual ministerial review. This is, in effect, an integrated and substantive way in which the Council can review progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of those conferences and summits and their follow-up processes and assess its impact on the achievement of the goals and targets of the conferences and summits, as envisaged by General Assembly resolution 61/16.

50. Coordination issues of the United Nations system are addressed in the following year's coordination segment. In its resolution 57/270B, the General Assembly invites the functional commissions and relevant follow-up mechanisms to contribute from their specific perspectives to the assessment by the Council of the cross-sectoral thematic issue selected for the coordination segment of its substantive session, including through the possible participation of their chairpersons, suitably mandated, in the discussions on the cross-sectoral thematic issue in the Council. As in previous years, the Council will have such opportunity to exchange views with the chairperson at the panel discussion to be organized for that purpose.

51. Given that the integrated substantive review is now being pursued by the annual ministerial review process and the procedural improvements of the follow-up processes have been completed for the time being, the annual report on the integrated follow-up may add little value going forward. **The Council may wish to triennialize the report to provide a reasonable time period before the next overall review of the integrated conference follow-up.**

52. At its sixty-fifth session, the General Assembly will review the implementation of resolution 61/16, which covers the procedural aspects of the Council's new functions. The Assembly could continue its substantive review of the integrated follow-up based on the annual comprehensive report of the Economic and Social Council.

C. Linking normative and operational work: promoting policy coherence at the inter-agency level and ensuring coordination at the country level

53. The 2005 World Summit Outcome called for strengthening of the linkages between the normative work of the United Nations and its operational activities. Linking the discussion of policy options to specific country experiences results in a more specific and hands-on debate and brings the Council closer to bridging the

divide between the normative and operational work of the United Nations. The annual ministerial reviews and the Development Cooperation Forums provide key forums for advancing that objective. During the annual ministerial review's national voluntary presentations, countries present an assessment of their progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals based on detailed national reports.[10] By systematically drawing upon regional and country-level assessments, the annual ministerial review can help to bridge the gap between the normative and operational work of the United Nations system.

54. Over the past few years, the United Nations system organizations have progressively strengthened their support to the integrated conference follow-up at the country level. Their effectiveness in promoting a more coordinated United Nations country team response to national priorities has increased through a number of tools such as the common country assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the results matrix, thematic groups and joint programmes. The "One United Nations" approach demonstrates the commitment of the Organization to strengthening system-wide coherence by delivering as one entity, and to align country programmes with national priorities as reflected in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and work in a cohesive, integrated, and more effective manner, while strengthening national ownership of development efforts. Driven by the strong belief that increased system-wide coherence in the working modalities of United Nations system member organizations can contribute significantly to their ability to deliver better "programmatic" results, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) is working to harmonize business practices across the United Nations system to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of United Nations system assistance.

55. However, despite the significant improvements made in recent years, the diverse approaches and the uneven capacities available to support country-level presence and action across the system continue to limit the system's capacity to mount integrated and comprehensive responses.

56. To help promote further coherence, the Economic and Social Council could develop stronger functional linkages with operational parts of the United Nations system through inter-agency arrangements that support the annual ministerial review. With the aim of strengthening its role and functioning, CEB recently completed a review of its structure and working methods. The integration of the United Nations Development Group into the CEB framework, alongside its two standing subsidiary bodies — the High Level Committee on Management and the High Level Committee on Programmes — that resulted from this review, will help ensure that operations at the country level are aligned with the strategic directions and priorities pursued at the programme level, while at the same time providing the mechanisms to strengthen coordination at the country level and incorporating feedback from country-level cooperation into programme and management processes at Headquarters level.

57. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs continues to serve as a platform for analytical and normative activities on economic and social issues

[10] See the 2008 National Voluntary Presentations Concept Note and 2008 National Voluntary Presentations Report Outline at http://www.un.org/ecosoc/newfund/amrnational.shtml.

within the United Nations Secretariat and to promote enhanced coordination and coherence among its members. The activities of the Executive Committee encompass a broad range of policy issues geared towards the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Executive Committee actively supports the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review, particularly with regard to the preparatory process and consultations at the regional level.

58. **A closer interaction between the Council and the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, the newly constituted CEB structure and the executive boards of funds and programmes could help ensure that the United Nations system organizations effectively support the implementation of conference commitments through their programming frameworks. The functional commissions should also continue to explore ways to engage United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes more systematically in their work. Further efforts would be needed to make effective use of the mechanisms for cooperation with financial and trade institutions, as envisaged in the 2005 World Summit and in the Monterrey Consensus.**

D. Strengthening the relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization in the implementation of the development goals

59. Since 1998, the Economic and Social Council has held a special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization immediately after the Spring meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The origin for those meetings can be found in the context of United Nations reform measures adopted at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, specifically in Assembly resolution 50/227. The meetings have facilitated a free-flowing dialogue among ministers of finance returning from the Washington, D.C., meetings, on the one hand, and ministers of development cooperation as well as ministers and high-level officials of foreign affairs, on the other. Civil society and private sector representatives have also participated in those meetings. The multi-stakeholder nature of the event has helped to strengthen partnerships for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals.

60. The 2002 Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development encouraged the United Nations, the World Bank and IMF, with the World Trade Organization, "to address issues of coherence, coordination and cooperation, as a follow-up to the Conference, at the spring meeting between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions".[11] Since then, the meeting has become a major intergovernmental focal point for follow-up to the agreements reached and commitments made at the International Conference on Financing for Development.

61. The 2008 special high-level meeting had special significance as it took place during the preparations for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for

[11] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha, from 29 November to 2 December 2008. Under the overall theme "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, including new challenges and emerging issues", the meeting provided major substantive inputs to the outcome of the Doha Review Conference.

62. As the Council now undertakes the annual ministerial reviews and the Development Cooperation Forums, its dialogue with the international financial and trade institutions will need to be further strengthened. While the number of ministers participating in the meeting has decreased in recent years, participation and full engagement of an unprecedented number of Executive Directors in both the meeting itself and the preparatory process has enriched the event.

63. The civil society and private sector component could be further strengthened and geared towards promoting collaboration and partnership between companies, foundations, Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to advance United Nations goals in the follow-up to the Monterrey Conference and the 2005 World Summit.

64. **Modalities for interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at the intergovernmental level should be further strengthened, subject to the outcome of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.**

E. Creating partnerships and alliances with all stakeholders

65. Over the last 15 years, there has been an unprecedented rise in the involvement of civil society and business representatives in United Nations conferences and summits. The participation of advocacy and interest groups, business and industry, research and academic institutions, and other relevant stakeholders has injected dynamism into the intergovernmental process and has strengthened engagement in the implementation of conference outcomes.

66. The innovative modalities of cooperation established for the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum have opened new opportunities to inject dynamism into the follow-up of the conferences, by promoting greater interaction among the different constituencies. This will be critical in building credibility for a genuinely strengthened Economic and Social Council through the sustained engagement and commitment of stakeholders.

67. As in 2007, a series of preparatory activities were held prior to the annual ministerial review in 2008. These included: (a) an open, online, month-long, multi-stakeholder e-discussion on the theme of the annual ministerial review, which engaged discussants with wide geographic coverage and diversity of views; (b) national multi-stakeholder meetings in Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia and Ghana in preparation of the voluntary national presentations taking the form of high-level dialogues with participants from Government, civil society and the private sector; (c) a regional forum in Bahrain on the theme of the review, bringing together multi-stakeholder participants from the region; and (d) an

informal event at United Nations Headquarters with expert panels examining sub-themes and engaging members of the United Nations community in interactive dialogue. The Economic and Social Council NGO Forum was held on 7 April 2008 as an opportunity to share best practices and success stories. At the 2007 annual ministerial review in Geneva, an Innovation Fair showcasing innovative programmes and projects was held with the participation of 12 United Nations system agencies, 29 civil society organizations and 10 private sector entities. The 2008 Innovation Fair is expected to draw a similar level of participation. **The Innovation Fair should evolve into a "matchmaking" event and be leveraged to seek solutions to the problems identified in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.**

68. The preparations for the 2008 Development Cooperation Forum have reflected the multi-stakeholder nature of the Forum. In addition to the Stakeholder Forum in Rome, which engaged parliamentarians and high-level representatives from civil society and local governments in an open and interactive dialogue on their roles in contributing to effective development cooperation, the high-level symposiums in Vienna and Cairo managed to provide stakeholders with a platform that complemented the participation of programme countries and bilateral and multilateral donors. Those three major preparatory events were each attended by more than 100 participants and partnerships with individual civil society, and international organizations played a key role in connecting a number of stakeholders. The inclusion of civil society organizations, parliamentarians as well as local government and private sector representatives provides for a unique opportunity to garner a wide range of inputs for a deepened dialogue on the future of international development cooperation. **The Forum should continue to take advantage of its distinctive profile by providing ample opportunities for the expression of views, priorities and analysis throughout the Development Cooperation Forum process.**

69. Economic and Social Council mechanisms such as the United Nations Information and Communications Technology Task Force, launched by the Council in 2001, and the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development, approved by the Secretary-General on 28 March 2006, provide lessons in building global multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances to further expand the Council's reach and circle of participants in its global policy dialogue.

III. Conclusion

70. **With the launching of the annual ministerial review, the process of integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences has become more substantive and visible. This should be nurtured by full support from functional commissions and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. However, structural and procedural changes for making the Economic and Social Council system more coherent and integrative will need to be reviewed at regular intervals. A triennial approach may be the best way to address this dimension of integrated follow-up.**